

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. _____



Date: July 9, 2004

To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge", written over the printed name of the City Manager.

Subject: **MIAMI BEACH AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA**

The purpose of this LTC is to update the Mayor and City Commission on the status of the City's pursuit of a National Heritage Area (NHA) Designation, which was discussed at the February 25, 2004 Commission meeting. A follow-up discussion of this effort will take place at the July 28, 2004 City Commission meeting.

A National Heritage Area is a region in which residents, businesses, and local governments have joined together to conserve and celebrate heritage and special landscapes. In these areas, the culture and history shape the landscape. Each heritage area is a settled landscape that tells the story of its residents, where the land and the local environment have shaped traditions and cultural values in the people who live there. A place where the resident's use of the land has created and sustained a landscape that reflects their cultures. This program does not involve Federal regulation of private property.

The management entity for the area may be a local governmental agency, a nonprofit organization, or even an independent Federal commission. The National Park Service provides technical assistance and funding assistance for an undetermined number of years following the designation. Programs in the heritage area include tours, museums and festivals, and are coordinated volunteer efforts overseen by the management entities.

Designation of a National Heritage Area in Miami Beach will require a Congressional designation. The steps include:

1. Completion of a feasibility study
2. Public involvement in the feasibility study
3. Demonstration of widespread public support among heritage area residents for the proposed designation
4. Commitment to the proposal from key constituents, which may include governments, industry, and private, nonprofit organizations, in addition to local residents.

Pursuit of a National Heritage Area designation for Miami Beach will require partnership between many organizations and agencies at the local, regional, state and federal levels, including: the City of Miami Beach, cultural and historic preservation organizations, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, Visit Florida, the Florida Department of State, the US Department of the Interior, Chambers of Commerce, neighborhood and

homeowners associations, museums, schools, business districts, and individual business owners and residents.

Three key components of the National Park Service review will be:

1. A local commitment to get resources
2. A grassroots effort, rather than simply a government initiative
3. Desire to implement the project with or without federal designation or funding.

Successful designation of Miami Beach as a National Heritage Area will require a two-pronged approach: Political and Organizational.

The political efforts will include strong support of the concept at the federal, state, and regional levels. This includes both elected officials (Congressional representatives, state legislators, county commissioners), and administration (Parks, Historic Preservation, Cultural agencies at the federal, state and county level). The City's state and congressional representatives have already indicated their support, as have State tourism and historic preservation officials. Additionally, the National Park Service, which administers the program, has already indicated interest in the concept of a National Heritage Area in Miami Beach. One charge of the Task Force will be to build on and expand this regional, state and national support.

The organizational effort consists of three subcategories:

1. Inventory/Asset Analysis (natural, cultural, and historic resources)
2. Development of Themes (history, evolution & progress, national significance)
3. Confluence of cultures (a story that's not being told, and/or, a story that can only be told in Miami Beach).

At the February 25, 2004 City Commission meeting, the Administration was directed to return to the Commission with the appropriate charge/mission for a NHA Task Force, as well as suggestions on categories for appointments to the task force.

The Administration recommends that the following Task Force mission and composition:

Mission

The Miami Beach National Heritage Area Task Force is a group of residents, businesses, and not-for-profits who are committed to working together to educate all who live, work, or visit Miami Beach about the area's natural, historic, and cultural resources, which, along with its people, have created a unique landscape and identity that, since its earliest beginnings through today, has been and continues to be an important part of the national heritage.

Specific Tasks

- Review existing assets and inventory new assets and resources.
- Designation of boundaries.
- Develop themes that tell the unique story of Miami Beach.
- Determine the scope of services for a consultant to prepare the feasibility study, if one is needed, and identify funding for the study preparation and presentation.
- Complete the feasibility study.
- Increase support of the Miami Beach NHA application by regional, state and

- national agencies, organizations and elected officials.
- Recommend structure of continuing management entity.

Organizations

Miami Design Preservation League
Dade Heritage Trust
Greater Miami CVB
Cultural Organization(s)

Individuals

Local/regional historian
Local resident(s)
Local business owner(s)
Local open space/environmental advocate
Local architect

On July 28, 2004, the Mayor and City Commission will consider a resolution authorizing the Administration to continue pursuing National Heritage Area designation. Additionally, the Administration will present a recommendation for membership of the proposed Task Force at the same time.

If you have a recommendation of an individual to serve on the Task Force, or any other questions and/or comments about this project please do not hesitate to contact me.

JMG/^{CAC}CMC/kc

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